BRAINARD'S

HALF-DIME HAND BOOKS.

# TRICKS AND TRAPS

—OF—

# NEW YORK CITY.

"To be forewarned is to be forearmed."

PUBLISHED BY C. H. BRAINARD,
BOSTON.
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1857.

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# TRICKS AND TRAPS

OF

# NEW ORLEANS,

AND THE

# WESTERN RIVERS.

The design of this work is to expose the way in which Strangers and Travellers are imposed upon and fleeced by villains who infest the Crescent City and the conveyances which float upon the Rivers leading thereto. It is presumed, that with this little book for an eye-opener, adviser, and guide, that any man who has brains, and will use them, may pass over the whole ground unscathed, particularly if he keep a civil tongue within his mouth, and bad liquor out of it.

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# TRICKS AND TRAPS

OF

# ST. LOUIS, CHICAGO,

AND THE

# FAR WEST.

One object of this book is to ventilate the processes by which unsuspecting people are duped and swindled in the leading cities of the West; but its chief aim is to instruct the Emigrant how to avoid imposition on the route to his new home, and particularly to expose the wiles, artifices, frauds, and over reachings of the Western land sharks and land speculators.

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Ex Libris

SEYMOUR DURST

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# PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

When the subject of the Tricks and Traps of New York city was given out to the gentlemen who have in this little book entered upon their task so happily, it was deemed possible to embrace all that was necessary of instruction, illustration and warning, in a volume of the size of the present; and as several gentlemen of worth and standing to whom the plan of the work has been submitted, had urged that it be published at a very low price so as thereby to secure an immense circulation, it was decided to publish it in a sixty-four page 32mo. volume, at five cents per copy.

But the subject has grown upon the authors' hands; they have found it impossible to treat it fully in so small a volume, without sacrificing to mere matter-of-fact utility every particle of that amount of wit and humor which is absolutely requisite to make the book interesting; and as without the retention of these attractive characteristics the work would in all probability fail of accomplishing the object proposed—usefulness and extensive publicity—the publisher has decided to recommend to the authors to take their own course and do full justice to their theme—satisfied that so long as the same number of pages and the same amount of matter, will, under the present plan be furnished at the price originally announced, the friends of the project, as well as the pub-

lic generally, will not complain of the issue of half a dozen volumes should so many be deemed necessary.

It was also supposed when this work was projected, that, like an Almanac, it would "answer for any meridian;" but though the examples and teachings it presents are of such general application as to make it of service every where, still differences of custom and habit, but more especially geographical and physical causes, render additional issues suited to other localities necessary, in order to form a work which shall, to use a popular phrase, be "National not Sectional." With this view, two other subjects, "The Tricks and Traps of New Orleans and the Western Rivers; and the Tricks and Traps of St. Louis, Chicago, and the Far West," (see second page of the cover), have been taken in hand and will be issued shortly.

The publisher will be gratified to receive any hints or suggestions from parties who may become interested in the objects of this work—and is disposed to pay a fair price for any manuscript that he can make serviceable.

# WHAT THIS BOOK IS MADE FOR.

YANKEE land abounds in felicitous rascals.

If the production of highly finished scoundrels ever becomes a matter of emulation among the nations of the earth, patriotism, a national pride in our country, and the undeniable facts in the case lead us to assert, that America need yield the palm to none; and should there ever be a great World Exhibition of Rogues, in which all nations shall vie with each other in producing fine assortments of scamps, we modestly claim in behalf of our beloved city of New York the very first place for its fine corps of swindlers. We admit that she has not, perhaps, so large a per centage of dishonest men as other towns are able to boast, but we humbly believe she could show as great a number of hitherto unknown varieties of knaves; she could make so fine a display of seedling rogues, so to speak, who have sprouted into unexpected forms of rascality, and developed strange kinds of vice, that society was totally unprepared for, that we should beat all competition out of the field, and our triumphant reprobates would walk away with all the first prizes.

The world, however, has not yet progressed so far in this direction that rascals have become cherished objects of national loving kindness, or even of popular commendation. It has not yet quite reached that point towards which, however, it

seems to be rapidly progressing, when rogues shall be the almost universal rule, and honest men the rare exceptions, for whom insane asylums shall be provided and tears of commiseration be shed by the pitying majority outside the bars. The present tide of public opinion sets the other way, and just now the popular prejudice is in favor of honesty and fair dealing.

Cheats and swindlers find their natural homes in great cities, and New York, which possesses ample accommodations for many thousands of these amiable, but at present unpopular gentry, is certainly overcrowded.

These differ somewhat in kind and quality, but they have one common object—to live without work upon the fat of the land, and put their hands in the pockets of other people for money with which to foot the bill. These tricksters, who live by their dishonest wits, are sometimes so ingenious as to provoke almost our admiration; and so assiduous and persevering in the prosecution of their illegal trades, that their attention to business might be quoted as an example to those who in honester walks of life are indolent and dilatory.

With the *great* robbers, the speculators of the Exchange, the fraudulent bankrupts, the defaulting bankers, the railway stock forgers, and other game of that huge size, this little work has nothing to do; it proposess to deal only with the *petty* rascals who infest the town; to show up the two-and-sixpenny thieves, and the small swindlers of every kind who surround unsuspecting strangers immediately upon their arrival in the city, and take inexperienced victims before they have had even time to shake off the country dirt from their feet, and get their eyes fairly open to the superior nastiness of New York mud.

This book is addressed particularly to persons of both sexes who are about making their first visit to this metropolis, and its object is to put them on the watch against the tricks and wiles of the sharp-witted, small-scale cheats of the town—to give them a knowledge of the swindlers they will encounter at every turn, and the traps and snares for which they must be constantly prepared—to, in short, condense into a small space a great deal of that valuable information which others who have not been forewarned against these perils of purse and pocket, have dearly bought with an actual experience as mortifying as it is expensive.

It is a very annoying circumstance to have one's pocket picked without the satisfaction of knowing who was the thief, and how the trick was done; but in that case one has the consolation of feeling that in that at least he himself is not to blame—but it is a most humiliating thing for a man to be fooled out of his money by the Patent Safe-Game, or the stuffed Pocket-Book dodge, and to realize that his own verdant simplicity has contributed more to his ensnaring than even the shrewd cunning of his victimizers.

No man likes to write himself down an ass; but after he has bet, and of course lost, his last dollar on the mysterious Thimble-Rig, he is very likely to have full faith in the length of his own ears, and will thereafter, whenever he meets one of the donkey genus, feel instinctively constrained to greet his assinine brother with a gentle bray of recognition. To prevent, in some measure, the increase in the land of this already too numerous tribe, this book is sent forth—and if any self-confident man, in glancing over its pages turns up his nose in contempt at the various simple tricks

by which other people have been gulled, and congratulates himself upon his own superior shrewdness, let that presumptuous individual beware—the chances are ten to one, that that identical self-conceited person will on his first visit to New York, before he has been twenty-four hours in the city, be victimized in more ways than he has got buttons on his shirt, and will thereby cut his wisdom teeth at the cost of all his small change.

Let no one to whom these pages shall come, contemptuously reject the word of friendly caution, however simple and unnecessary it may seem, for it may always be turned to good account by persons who are unskilled in the ways of the world; and our word for it, the farmer's boy who should come to New York, thinking by pure mother wit alone to outgeneral the professional sharpers of this interesting town, would stand an equal chance of success with that city youth, who, having no knowledge of agriculture, should attempt to manage a farm, and expect to raise abundant crops by sowing wheat in the middle of August, or digging through the snow-drifts of December to plant his early potatoes.

The plan of this diminutive volume will be to take up, one by one, the different classes of scoundrels to whose arts strangers are the most exposed, to give, as far as possible, the general characteristics of their appearance and manner, to note down the particular haunts infested by each; to give an exposure of their modes of doing business, and to illustrate the whole by true anecdotes of real adventures which have happened to acquaintances of the writer; or which have been exposed from time to time in the newspapers, or which may be found on the records of the various police courts.

It is hoped that no inconsiderable amount of good may be accomplished in this manner ; that some young girls may find herein words of useful warning, which shall put them on their guard against the wiles of the Fortune tellers—the sham Intelligence office proprietors, and the other numerous villains, of that class, who are always in league with seducers and keepers of houses of ill fame, and who find among unsophisticated country girls the easiest prey.

And it is also believed that many young men who come here to go into business, or to see the sights, and who would, perhaps, like hundreds of their illustrious predecessors, be swindled out of everything they possess, even to their boots and breeches, may by these few well meant hints be spared this mortification ; that they may be reminded to have their wits about them, and thus have the satisfaction of beholding, at a fair and honest price, all in the city that is worth looking at; and the writer trusts that this little book may do something towards keeping all its readers from moral detriment, or pecuniary loss while passing that course of metropolitan experiences popularly denominated "*seeing the Elephant.*"

## CHAPTER I.

### PETER FUNK SHOPS.

The Peter Funks of New York have been so often described, and the various habits and tricks of the animal so often noted, that it seems almost a work of supererogation for us to set up our finger-board to mark the characteristics of the unclean thing. But we have in our daily walks through the city, seen so many convincing proofs of their still existing rascality, that it is impossible to cherish the fond hope that they have yet been so put down as to be of little account. To ignore the presence in our midst of these fellows, would be like sitting down on a hornet's nest, and while those amiable insects were stinging us to madness, swearing that they were butterflies, and that there was no such thing as a hornet in America. Peter Funks *do* exist here in our most crowded streets, and on the most public corners. Everywhere, in fact, where they can spread their impudent nets with any likelihood of entrapping their verdant prey.

And the constantly recurring cases of Peter Funked countrymen, whose bad bargains in brass watches and pewter jewelry, are every now and then reported in the newspapers ; to say nothing of the equally mortifying though not so expensive experiences in dry goods and other articles, of their more worldly wise brethren of the cities and large

towns that are not so publicly reported, show conclusively the truth of the round old saying, that "the fools are not all dead yet."

It is not for the benefit of this hopeless class that this article is written—for a fool will be a fool even should you drill a hole in the top of his head, and pour in quarts of liquid wisdom through a tin funnel; but there are many people in the world to whom a word in season will suffice to place them on their guard against these beings who should have been born sharks with leathery hides and forked tails, but who, by some inexplicable mistake of Dame Nature, are bipeds, parading this mundane sphere in boots and breeches. Lest the innocent persons for whose advantage these lines are penned, should be ignorant even of the meaning of the name "Peter Funk," it is best to begin at the beginning and describe what a "Peter Funk" is.

The Peter Funk of the city is a small souled pick-pocket; he does not exactly cut through your coat or pants, and insert his digits therein, but under specious pretences he induces you to hand over your purse to him, thus virtually making a cat's-paw of your fist; he is a man who steals your cash, but does it under a flimsy show of business; he inveigles you into an offer, and then either sells you one article and delivers you another which is inferior, or multiplies the price you have proffered, and the quantity you engaged to take. The wares he puts off upon his victims are almost valueless and sometimes worse than nothing. A man who is silly enough to buy a watch of a Peter Funk auctioneer, is often stupid enough to expend money on it afterwards, in a vain endeavor to make it go; when for all the good such endeavors will effect, he might as well spend his

superfluous cash in putting a balance wheel on a clam-shell, and thereby trying to make it keep good time.

The most notorious and noticeable of the Funks are the Mock Auctioneers; they have their offices in the very heart of the city; on Broadway, in Chatham street, and the Bowery and other quarters that would not be suspected. They make no pretence of concealment, but open the doors of their shops and bellow as lustily as if their business was the most honest in the community. The worst class deal principally in watches and galvanized jewelry, which they sell as the genuine articles to those unsuspecting strangers who step into their stores in the hope of picking up a cheap bargain. The watch the buyer carries off is certain to be a dummy (a watch with no works inside) or a galvanized composition article for which he has paid three times its value; and all jewelry that comes from these establishments is utterly worthless and false.

The Peter Funk is generally a flashily dressed man, with a profusion of jewelry about his person, and his den has the appearance often of a most respectable place of business. He is always surrounded by a number of persons who, when a stranger enters, are actually engaged in bidding against each other with the greatest apparent eagerness, as if each was afraid of losing a rare bargain. These individuals are "decoys,' or mock bidders, who are hired by the chief of the establishment to act the part of *bona fide* customers. They are all carefully "got up" for the purpose, and disguise themselves as respectable people in many ways. One will appear with the black garments and white cravat of a preacher, and will preserve the long face and sanctimonious

deportment befiting the gravest of the cloth,—another will come out in the garb of a quaker, with drab habiliments and wide hat, and will "thee" and "thou" his fraternal rascals with as an honest a face as if he were not the greatest scamp of them all; while another will be dressed as a country farmer and will do iniquitous service in homespun and hob-nails. There is no church in the city where there is less appearance of rowdyism than that in some of the Peter Funk auction shops. Any thing that would be likely to cause a person to suspect that he was in the company of sharpers would be ruinous to the business and is therefore most carefully avoided.

To give the uninitiated individual an idea of their mode of doing business, let us suppose a scene. Imagine a neatly fitted up shop, the most prominent feature of which is the "boss devil,' in shape of the auctioneer. This person attired in the glossiest of broadcloth, the whitest of linen, the shiniest of boots and the choicest of jewelry, is perched upon a stand with a watch in his hand, the excellence of which he is lauding at the top of his voice, occasionally stopping his rapid talk to open and display the article he has to sell.

Around the room are distributed the "decoys" or "ropers in," who look as respectable as so many missionaries or hard-working farmers in their Sunday clothes. They are chatting among themselves in slang terms, cracking their jokes with each other in the most loaferish friendly way, until suddenly a customer heaves in sight, when their whole demeanour changes instantly and they behave as if they were perfect strangers to each other.

As soon as the hoped for customer is in, the auctioneer redoubles his laudations of his watch,

and offers it for the inspection of the crowd; it is passed from hand to hand, and comments are made by the "decoys" especially intended for the ears of the new comer, after this fashion: "Fine watch;" "eighteen carat gold;" "genuine Johnson movement;" "cheap as dirt;" "splendid bargain;" "the man don't know what he is selling;" "worth any man's $200." At last it reaches the hand of the customer, Young Innocence, who has heard every word of all this; if he is not a judge of watches he is very likely to trust the opinions of so many men who appear to be strangers to each other, and to have no interest in praising an article which does not belong to them; if on the contrary he chances to be able to tell a good watch when he sees one, he takes a careful look at it himself and discovers that it is in reality an excellent time-piece, and also observes that none of those around him who are bidding against each other are offering half the real value of the thing. He is, therefore, most likely impressed at once with the idea of getting an excellent bargain, and turning a pretty penny by buying a really valuable article for half price.

Young Innocence accordingly joins in the bidding, which is of course kept up againt him with much spirit, the decoys being however exceeding careful to have the watch finally struck off to the stranger. He overjoyed with his bargain at once hands over his money.

Now comes the grand secret of the whole transaction. The watch exhibited for sale was a genuine article of high value. As soon however, as it is knocked off to his customer, the auctioneer, with a most bland smile and obsequious manner insists upon putting it in a box and tying it up nicely. In doing this *he changes watches*, substi-

tuting for the "genuine Johnson," a plated brass one of similar appearance, but which, instead of being worth $200, would be dear at twenty cents a peck.

Young Innocence, suspecting nothing, goes away rejoicing; and when he finds out his mistake either concludes that the experience is worth the money, and so hides his mortification and shame in his own bosom; or else braving a report in the morning papers, he speeds to the police office and obtains an officer to go with him to the Funk Shops and try to get his money back. In this he is sometimes partially successful, and after much trouble, and a good round fee to the officers, he may recover half what he invested.

Sometimes the victim gets his wrath up to concert pitch, and resolving to take it out in dry knocks, proceeds to the place to kick up a huge row; in which event Young Innocence is sure to have the worst of it. In that case the hangers-on of the establishment set upon him; the parson-looking man will pick his pocket, while the Quaker punches his head; and they often finish such a customer by contriving to have him arrested by some accommodating police officer, and carried off to cool his ire in the Tombs.

This is a short history of the commonest game of the Mock Auctioneer; and although the story has been told a thousand times, and printed on thousands of sheets and diffused through all the land, still hundreds are fooled every year by the same process, and probably will continue to be until some generation of men is born into the world with their wisdom teeth ready cut, as the following incident makes evident: —

A few years since, just after some outrageous cases of Mock Auction swindling, the Mayor of

this city employed men to parade up and down Broadway, with signs upon poles, bearing the words "Beware of Mock Auctions." Before the most notorious den of all he stationed a trusty policeman, with the largest sign of the lot, "Beware of Mock Auctions!!!!!"—and into this very place, and on the first day of the bannermen's appearance, walked a green-horn and got victimized; giving as a reason, when making his complaint, that as the standard.bearer was a policeman, and stationary, he thought it was all the *other* auction shops he was to *beware* of—he judged in this case, doubtless as he had of Patent Medicines, that those are *most* genuine which are the heaviest labelled with "Beware of Counterfeits." The next day every Peter Funk had his own private standard-bearer; and so great a laugh was raised against the Mayor out of this incident that he let the Peter Funks alone for the rest of his term. Verily it is harder to shield some persons from harm, than it is to "keep a moth from a candle."

Two cases which have fallen under the writer's direct observation will serve to illustrate the subject, and to show the practical workings of the Mock Auction dodge.

A young man, named Charles Wilbor, who has since outgrown his greenness and become amply able to take care of himself, came down to New York from the undiscovered wilds of Rhode Island, to see the town, and learn as to the truth of all the stories he had heard about "York." Charley was a pretty clever fellow so long as he staid in the country—he could chop as much cord-wood, or plant as many potatoes in a day as any of his inches; he was an acknowledged beau at the husking frolics and parin' bees, and at the

spelling-schools he reckoned himself hard to beat, and had on sundry occasions "spelt down" the whole school. Charley was, in his own estimation at least (and he hasn't got over it yet) an exceedingly cute chap.

Well, Charley got tired of farm work and determined to visit the city and see the sights. The village tailor equipped him in a suit that was fearfully and wonderfully made; the paternal Wilbour gave him a hundred and twenty dollars, and down he came. The very first day of his sojourn in the metropolis he dropped into an auction shop, where a gentlemanly looking man was selling watches. The gentlemanly looking man "spotted" Charley instanter, for his verdancy was palpable; he was in fact, so very green that his appearance excited country emotions in the breasts of sundry Vermont stage horses, and they evinced a strong desire to go and lie down in the shade of him. But Charley thought he was smart, and thoroughly believed in his own wide-awake-a-tiveness, and power of outwitting any city sharpers who might make a set at him.

Into the shop strolled the Rhode Island innocent, and immediately the Peter Funk and his attendant sprites scented their victim.

Charley looked around with an air of bashful "cuteness," as if he wanted them to understand that it was no use trying to fool him. Seeing however a set of respectable and grave persons about him, he was soon completely off his guard.

It is of no use to detail the exact particulars of his victimization. Suffice it to say, that the long-haired Charley, the gay beau of Little Cowtown, was completely taken in. He left behind him a hundred and eleven dollars, in return for which he carried away a watch which would no more

keep time than a town pump, and which was worth about four cents a pound, by weight. Moreover, one of the Funks followed him and made him redeem a Jersey ten dollar bill, on which there was five per cent. discount.

Charley went into a jeweller's shop to buy a key; Charley bought a key—Charley tried to wind his watch, but the watch wouldn't wind—he might as well have tried to wind up a county court-house. Charley discovered he was sold and resolved on vengeance; he would go and demand that Funk should make restitution or he would make a row; he thought his brawny arms, which had been developed by country labor, would be amply sufficient to maul the aforesaid Peter. So Charley hastened to the shop, hoping to arrive there before the respectable customers who had bid against him departed; for he meant to charge Peter with fraud, and appeal to these men who were spectators of the transaction to see him righted. To Charley's great delight he found the same set of customers present; by some lucky accident, so it seemed to him, none of them had gone; so Charles counted on speedy justice.

Charley walked in and demanded his money back; Peter couldn't think of it—Charley insisted—Peter was firm—Charley told Peter that if he did not restore the money he would be thrashed; Peter thought not; Charley was sure of it, and began to take off his coat. Peter stood unmoved—Charley had got his coat off, he handed it to a quiet looking man who seemed to regard him as an injured individual; then he asked Peter for the money—Peter didn't think it could be done—Charley took off his vest and handed it to the friendly gentleman—then he asked for the money—Peter thought not—Charley took off his

cravat and handed it to the quiet man—then he demanded his money—Peter thought not—Charley took off his shirt collar and gave it to the quiet man—then he asked for his hundred and eleven dollars—Peter thought not—Charley then rolled up his sleeves and for the "last time" asked for his money, Peter still thought not. Then Charley made a rush at Peter, intending to smash him, but all the quiet gentlemen "thought not" this time; one tripping Charley's foot—his fist went into the counter; the rest set upon him, and in a few minutes his head was battered so that he could not have told his face from nine pounds of raw beef. Then he was pitched out of the back-door, the quiet gentleman who held his clothes giving him a parting kick as he went over the threshold.

The door was instantly bolted, and Charley found himself in the street, minus all his money and half his clothes, and his head one universal damage. He luckily found a friend who took care of him, and provided him with funds to return home. He eventually returned to this city and is earning a good living in a respectable capacity; is thoroughly posted in New York rascality, and particularly well informed on the subject of Mock Auctions and Peter Funks.

The Peter Funks, however, do not always come off first best. Some years since, the mate of an Eastern vessel having been taken in by some of these rascals, squeezed dry and pitched out of their shop, returned shortly with a crew of his brother mates, and closing and bolting the doors, the seamen gave all inside a regular mellowing; unfortunately, however, including in the number a very respectable gentleman from Michigan, who like poor Tray, was found in bad company; coming out from the Funk den, the leader of this band of

Retributionists turned to the listening policeman, (who on the occasion of his former visit, had seen him ejected from the premises without saying a word except to advise him to "be off, and make no further disturbance,") and told him he was a Funk, and he should receive the same sauce if he opened his clam-shell or laid his finger on one of the party; and the delighted crowd taking their part, the now perfectly satisfied Tar-Tar and his company, after giving three rousing cheers, departed unmolested and triumphant.

The other case referred to, was that of a very respectable druggist belonging to one of the largest cities of New England, who, since the writing of the Introductory Chapter to this work, came to New York and got victimized. He was a well educated and well read man, and took the New York papers; but despite all this and the knowledge he had gained of city life over his own counter, he took a new lesson in our huge school of nature to add to his fifty years' experience of human vileness. In a self-sacrificing spirit he detailed his mishap to the writer, requesting that the incident should be published in this little book for the benefit of the very class of self-confident individuals to whom the Introductory Chapter refers, and among the chief of which he considers himself entitled to be ranked.

Dr. Pill-cochia had finished his business ready to take the evening boat home, and to kill time took a stroll in Broadway; passing by several of the Mock Auction shops, and smiling in pity on the verdants he saw therein, he came to a very respectable looking Dry Goods store, with a red flag hanging outside, and not a Minnie Rifle shot from the Park, when "shawls at only 56 cents," struck his ear; he stopped and stepped confidently

in, and there sure enough were good sized and handsome summer shawls "going at 56;" intending to purchase some presents for his country nieces, he "went in" with the crowd, and at his bid of 60 cents down came the hammer, with a "How many, sir?" "One box," was the reply. "Mr. Cash takes a box at sixty. Who takes another?" Dr. Pill-cochia stepped up briskly to the very respectable appearing clerk at the highly polished black-walnut desk, and laid down one of Uncle Sam's gold eagles; this was immediately snatched up, and a bill for "One box, 10 shawls, $60," thrust under his nose. "My bid was 60 *cents* a shawl," says the Deacon, in a very decided tone, "and I shall neither accept the goods or pay the bill." "You will not?" rejoined the very indignant clerk. "Why, my good sir, you look like a business man, and do you pretend to say that you *expected* to buy such shawls as those for 60 cents a-piece? The thing is preposterous on the face of it. What hotel do you stop at, I shall send up the package and insist that the bill be paid." Such a procedure and exposure, if coming to the ears of his waggish friends at home, would have cost Deacon P. the entire yearly receipts of his soda fountain; so the finale was that he took away two shawls at $6 each, such as he could have bought of his next door neighbor at $3.25, and abandoned the remaining dollars of his gold eagle to the auctioneer to pay the expense and commissions for re-selling the rest of his purchase. "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall," is the advice the Deacon freely gives to his friends bound to New York.

In a like spirit of self-sacrifice, the writer of this particular paragraph admits, that several years since he himself had half a million of needles

stuck into him by a very skillful New York auctioneer and his three assistants, when truly he had bargained for but a thousand; he makes this confession with a view to induce others whose experience in various ways, if detailed in this work, would serve the public good, to send in their narratives to the publisher; and he has not a doubt if a tithe of those "who *could* tell a tale" would come forward, the company would be very respectable in numbers, at least.

## CHAPTER II.

### POCKET-BOOK DROPPERS, THIMBLE-RIGGERS, AND PATENT-SAFE SWINDLERS.

PROBABLY the greatest fools in this dusty vale of tears, are two-and-sixpenny knaves ; men silly enough to be constantly endeavoring to overreach their fellow-travellers in this piggish world, by low cunning and petty meanness, and small tricks contemptible enough to cause the cheek of an honest man to blush with shame, and make him want to box the ears of grand-mother Eve for having brought into the world such a scurvy set of brats.

There is one comfort about the thing, however, which is that these would-be smart chaps are not unfrequently caught in their own traps, and sometimes cut their own fingers with the tools they have carefully sharpened for somebody else.—That's the time when honest men must rejoice, and throw up their caps, and kick up their heels and have a good time generally. For there is never known a jolly good fellow of the right stamp who sees a rogue fairly caught and exposed in a little bit of scampism without feeling a strong disposition to indulge in hilarious fancy horn-pipes, to an extent that would make his heels as tender as first love, and his knee-pans rattle like

a quarter's worth of small change in a wooden contribution-box.

These few remarks are a fitting prelude to our little sermon on Pocket Book Droppers and Thimble-Riggers, and the Patent-Safe Games; and if the reader does not see the relevancy thereof before we get to "seventeenthly," he'd better step up to the Captain's office and get his money back, for we can assure him that he hasn't got sense enough to get his five cents' worth out of this little volume.

The reason why these remarks, remarkable as they are for "solid chunks" of wisdom, and for their winning and particularly jolly gracefulness, are appropriate upon this occasion, is this :—No man, boy or green-horn was ever yet victimized by the Pocket-Book Droppers, the Thimble-Riggers, or the Patent-Safe men, who didn't have so strong a spice of the scamp in his own composition as to think he was coming a sure and profitable swindle upon some one not up to his own level of sharpness and treachery. These three games are all levelled at that particular trait of human nature which makes men desire to grab and pocket somebody's spare cash, without rendering an equivalent therefor; and the very reason why so many persons are losers by them, is that the great majority of mankind are so highly seasoned with roguery that it comes to the surface with the slightest provocation. There are hundreds of men pretending to be civilized, who although they wouldn't commit murder or highway robbery, and probably wouldn't pick pockets for fear of being detected in that fashionable recreation, would, nevertheless, pocket a man's last dime without remorse, if they could get hold of it under color of a bet or a bargain. One of the

permitted amusements of a good Christian is to keep a sharp eye on these would-be-sharpers, and to laugh clean down to his toe-nails when he sees one of them out-sharped ; and great is the rejoicing of his charitable heart when he beholds those who go out for wool come home shorn.

Pocket-Book Dropping may be almost considered as one of the by-gones; it being very seldom attempted except in cases of very aggravated verdancy on the part of the victim. It is always done in the same manner, and the tools necessary for the perfect performance of this little comedy are a green-horn, one, or perhaps two sharpers, and an old pocket-book full of counterfeit or broken bank bills.

Perhaps the best way to give an idea of the plan, is to detail the experience of an individual whom we will call Ned Underhill, and which one circumstance is only one of twenty years' series of verdant things in which Underhill aforesaid, has been engaged all his life.

When Ned first came to New York, in 1849, before he had got the hay-seed out of his hair, he was one day strolling up Chatham street, admiring the manifold curiosities of that Israelitish locality. He had resolutely repulsed all the hook-nosed Hebrews, who wanted him to buy second-hand clothing, and, with a hard-heartedness, which has utterly deserted him later in life, had shown himself proof against the seductions of a black-eyed Jewess, who had tried to persuade him that a pair of pantaloons, big enough for half a dozen Scotch giants rolled into one, were just the thing for him, "the tip-top of the fashion and a sphlendid fit," when suddenly a pocket-book was dropped at his feet, and as suddenly picked up by a

well-dressed young man who was apparently in a furious hurry.

The well-dressed young man asked Ned if it was his pocket-book. The devil in Ned's checked shirt-bosom suggested that he should say "Yes," and pocket the book without further question, but somehow he actually said "No," a piece of unpremeditated honesty which quite took him by surprise. The well-dressed young man walked by his side, and opened the treasure, disclosing to the astonished gaze of Ned a number of bills of the denomination of tens, twenties and fifties.

"Very strange," said the stranger, "here, I must leave the city on the first train, and what to do with this money I really don't know. There seems to be several hundred dollars of it; it will of course be advertised in the morning, and a large reward offered; it's too bad that I can't stay to get it; no one will think of offering less than one hundred dollars for the recovery, and I must go to New Haven on the next train, for my poor uncle is dying."

Ned couldn't volunteer any aid, for he didn't feel exactly delicate about offering to relieve the man either of his newly found treasure or his dying uncle. But a sudden thought came to the stranger, and he acted upon it instantly. Turning to Ned, he again spoke, "See here, friend, you look like an honest man, and I feel that I can trust this matter with you. I'll give you this money, and divide the reward with you. Give me fifty dollars, and in the morning you can restore it to the owner and pocket the full reward."

This suited Ned's complaint exactly, but he hadn't the fifty; however, he raked out twenty-seven dollars and a silver watch, which he passed over to the accommodating stranger, and received

the pocket-book, while the man with the dying uncle made tracks into the dim distance.

The honest Underhill tucked the treasure under his checked shirt, hugged it to his heart, fully intending to appropriate the entire amount to his own private use, and hurried to his room at his cheap Greenwich street tavern, where he locked himself in and proceeded to count his treasure-trove.

The sequel can of course be imagined. There were bank bills to the amount of two hundred dollars, Wild Cat Michigan money, broke all to flinders fourteen months before, and worth about a dollar and a half a ton. The remaining bulk was made up of fly-leaves torn out of a shilling Testament.

My gentle Edwin was sold; my gentle Edwin forgot his gentleness and swore fearfully; but no amount of profanity, however excusable under the circumstances, could bring back that twenty-seven dollars, good money—could restore that silver watch, or give him a single minute's private interview with the gentleman who was in such a hurry to get to New Haven to see his respected uncle kick the bucket.

This is the whole mystery of the pocket-book game; the complete thing reduced to a point—the entire secret boiled down to half a gill, so that it can be taken at a dose, and thoroughly cure our readers of any liability to be imposed upon and humbugged by New York Pocket-Book Droppers.

## THE THIMBLE-RIG DODGE.

The Thimble-Rigger is a bird of passage; that is to say, he is continually on the wing. He is particularly prevalent about race-courses, cricket-

grounds, and wherever there may be an idle crowd collected away from the city, with a spare sprinkling of green-horns in it; and it is only the *very* green ones who are verdant enough to be taken in by him, for the very appearance of the man is enough, in most cases, to deter a person with even a scanty allowance of brains from risking any spare cash on the "little joker." The implements used in this game are very simple, and consist of a little stand, three thimbles and a little ball about the size of a small pea. Not unfrequently the operator dispenses with the stand altogether, and uses his knee instead. He puts the pea under one of the thimbles in the full sight of everybody, changes it from one to another a few times, and then in a confident voice, challenges any one to bet under which thimble the pea, or "little joker" is. He has a little bit of legerdemain by means of which he changes the pea from one thimble to another imperceptibly, and in a manner absolutely impossible to be detected by inexperienced eyes. It therefore follows, that if a man is so confident that he knows the exact whereabouts of the "little joker," that he is willing to bet his money on it, he must inevitably lose. The sharper in moving the pea about from one position to another, unconsciously, to all appearances, allows the bystanders to see him, in apparently the fairest manner possible, place it under one of the thimbles. Some victim, then, thinking to take advantage of what appears to him an inadvertance on the part of the gambler, offers to stake a certain amount of money that he can point out the position of the little ball. The sharper at once puts up the cash, and when the green one with a triumphant smile points out the thimble which as he supposes covers the nimble little

sphere, to his great astonishment it has disappeared and is discovered snugly concealed under an unsuspected thimble, whither it has been cunningly conveyed by the quick finger and thumb of the gambler. The thimble-rigger is always surrounded by a few fellows who are confederates, and whose business it is to encourage outsiders to risk their money, and also to protect their principal in case of any muss.

Frank Otter, an ugly looking specimen of backwood's humanity, was victimized by the thimble-rig game. After he had resided two years and a half in this city; so deep-seated was the natural greenness in his system, it seemed to be constitutional; and although he is now a jour printer of moderate repsectability, there is still a strong dash of the old-time verdancy in his character.

Frank went to the Long Island race course, where he encountered a knight of the thimble. Frank had heard of the game before, but Frank thought himself so particulary up to snuff that he was perfectly safe; so Frank stood by to see the game go on, and see if he could follow the "little joker" on his travels, and mark his stopping places every time. The Artful Dodger, who was regarding him with a speculative eye, humored his customer, and in five minutes Frank thought he had got the hang of the thing completely—he laughed long and loud at the wrong guesses of several of the by-standers (who he afterwards found were partners in the game), and complimented himself hugely on his sagacity. So certain was he that he had caught the trick, that at last he bet a ten spot to prove the accuracy of his observation. Frank lost of course. Perceiving that he had been swindled he determined on revenge, speedy and effective — to that end he with commendable

promptness and presence of mind, knocked the Thimble-Rig-man about four rods, with a single blow of his fist, for he had a hand like a quarter of beef, and a foot like a range of leather mountains.

The belligerant printer, however, only got one single broadside into the enemy, before he was boarded by the whole crew, who pummelled him till his face looked as if somebody had used his head to fight bumble-bees with. He found his way to a low shop where he bathed his face in rum to take out the swelling. It is supposed that he must accidentally have swallowed some of the liquor, for he was found two days after by a watchman trying to unlock the Crystal Palace with a night-key, so that he could go to bed in the dome.

We need hardly caution those who peruse this pamphlet, never to bet on the Thimble-Rig Game, for we earnestly believe that those who have caution enough to invest five cents in this book, and sense enough to read it, will have too much of both to be gulled by the shallow swindling of the New York Thimble-Riggers.

## THE PATENT-SAFE GAME.

Safe, safe, Patent-Safe, what does he mean, I wonder? There you go, young Innocence, thinking of Herring's Fire Proof, or Wilder's Patent Salamander, I'll be bound. The Safe to which I refer, is no such cumbrous and ponderous machine, but a most ingenious little device to do spoonies out of their funds. The "Patent Safe," frequently called the "Mexican Puzzle," and sometimes known as the "Chinese Balls," is a small ivory or wooden ball, having two concealed apartments; the sufferer, however, knows nothing

of the existence of the second one, until the instant he discovers that he has been cleverly duped by a pair of confederate sharpers.

The manner of using it is as follows: one of the swindlers having made the acquaintance of the intended victim, induces him to make a short pleasure excursion for an hour or two, to the Elysian Fields, at Hoboken, to Greenwood, to Staten Island, or some near by retired spot. Once there they fall in with the other swindler, who affects to be a stranger to both of them, and in the course of conversation this latter person produces the "Safe," and exhibits it as a curiosity. Opening one of the secret compartments, he shows a little bit of paper enclosed therein. The other scamp now borrows the little instrument, and in the sight of the stranger he opens it and takes out the piece of paper, and throws it away, the owner of the ball in the meantime looking the other way or engaging himself with something else.

The safe is now returned to the owner, and his confederate commences bantering him for a bet, about the piece of paper inside. A bet is eventually made up between the two, and the owner of the safe puts up his money, when the other one discovers that he has not enough by a hundred or two dollars to cover the amount. He accordingly proposes to borrow of the stranger that amount for just five minutes, proposing to give him half the winnings. The victim having seen the paper abstracted, and of course feeling confident that his companion will win and repay him at once, immediately hands him over the cash. The owner of the ball now opens the *second* compartment, and produces *another* piece of paper, thus winning the bet; he then at once makes off with the money, and divides with his companion, who soon con-

trives to rid himself of the stranger, who being now squeezed as dry as a lemon, is of no further use. The spoils are divided, and the despoiled sufferer has to grin and bear it.

This is the *modus operandi* of the "Patent Safe." There are of course some slight variations from this formula, but the general features as thus given will apply to most cases. It is one of the many Confidence games by which unwary strangers are fleeced, and which are so called from the fact that the swindlers first make the acquaintance, and secure to a certain extent, the *confidence* of his proposed game. The most ingenious devices are resorted to by this class of sharpers to ingratiate themselves into the good opinion of desirable strangers with big money bags. They display a perseverance, which in another calling would be most praiseworthy. If a Confidence man was a tinker, and exhibited half the enterprise in the legitimate exercise of that gay business that he does in robbing honester people, he could in a year make tin pans enough to shingle America, or construct a pile of copper tea-kettles that would rival in size the old he-Pyramid itself. They manifest a wonderful tact—laying their plans deep, and always contriving to spring the trap when their victim becomes ripe for their purpose by having a large sum of money with him. Some of them make a systematic business of it, sparing no money or pains, or time, to thoroughly secure the confidence of the man they want to plunder, the object being to throw him completely off his guard; many a man lives for days on terms of jovial good fellowship with some roystering blade he picks up at the fashionable hotel where he stops; and enjoys with him (oftentimes scot free,) champaign and oysters, and — other delicacies of

the season, only to find at last, that his boon companion is only a contemptible black-leg, intent upon fleecing him, and whose sole means of living are cowardly swindling.

These fellows hang round the principal hotels in great numbers, watching their chance to rob a stranger by enticing him to some Gambling Hell, or where they come the Patent-Safe Game over him, or have his pocket picked, or himself robbed, perhaps garrotted, by their confederates.

All Patent-Safe men, however, are not Confidence men; many infest the out-of-the-way parks and places of resort and interest to strangers, contenting themselves with game of a more humble class than that which patronizes the Astor House or St. Nicholas Hotel.

It was with a party of these chaps, that a friend of the writer had an adventure in Greenwood Cemetery. Livingston Welles, for such is his romantic cognomen, is a Michigander of rather mild appearance externally, green as a frog, but with the courage of fifty-six boiled-down devils in him, and the strength of a high-pressure steam engine to back him up. Welles went to Greenwood, and during his visit, while standing about with a cigar in his mouth, was accosted by several individuals who, after some conversation, and two or three big drinks from a private bottle of theirs behind a tomb-stone, got him to bet on the piece of paper in the little wooden ball.

Livingston bet all his money, his watch and chain (the gift of an elder brother), his shirt studs and his new gaiters, and of course, he lost all, and there was a fair chance of his going home in his stockings.

The other chaps, as they were four to one, did

not apprehend any trouble, and began to make sport of the verdant youth.

At last, it got through his then rather thick head, that he had been fooled, whereupon he took off his coat and struck out right and left, a la Tom Hyer. A black-leg fell down at every blow, and in one minute by the watch, the delegate from Michigan was master of the field. He dragged the prostrate swindlers into a pile under a big monument, inscribed "Sacred to the memory of ———," and battered their heads against the marble till they were as mellow as harvest apples.

Then he re-captured his own money and property, took the last drink of their private brandy, broke the bottle over the head of the ring-leader, and victoriously walked away.

Notwithstanding the fact that these fellows are sometimes beaten at their own game, they are very unsafe and unprofitable persons to have to do with, and we recommend our readers, who visit the big city, to steer clear of the Patent-Safe, and keep a sharp look out for *Confidence Men*.

## CHAPTER III.

### PICK-POCKETS—MALE AND FEMALE.

Now we've said our little say about the swindlers, who take money from inexperienced persons under the guise of a wager, or similar sort of half-way fairness and give-a-man-a-chance-for-his-life-ish-ness, we come by a regular gradation up to a higher class of dishonorables, a more honest kind of thieves, the regular pick-pockets. *More honest* did we say? Well, we don't mean exactly that, but *less contemptible;* for we hold that the individual who steals money from your pocket and sneaks away before you catch him at it, is not half so mean a thief as that one who inveigles you into a bet, and not only takes away your cash but laughs at you into the bargain.

We're very glad that we've got done with these scurvy knaves, and as we wash our hands of their dirty tricks, we come with a certain feeling of relief to the more endurable and in a certain sense chivalrous class of rogues—pick-pockets, highway robbers, and garrotters; chivalrous, because unlike the former, who in almost every case are allowed to go free upon giving up their plunder, these carry their three or ten year handcuffs in all their ventures; and more endurable from not causing a man to feel like a ninny as well as a victim. But before dismissing this portion of our subject, we

feel impelled to say to our readers that the "drop game" is not always played with broken bank *bills* and brown paper, or "thimble-rig" with a "*little joker.*" There is another class of these practitioners who, compared with those we have above ventilated, are as sharks to pickerel, or as whales to pond-suckers. How many who read these pages will admit, with a long-drawn sigh, that in the manœuvres we have just exposed they discern the identical process by which in Wall, or State, or Third streets, they have through Insurance and Mining shares, and Railroad and Bank stocks, been victimized out of all they possessed. No matter what your sex or what your position in life, dear readers, there is a moral for each one of you in every chapter in this half-dime book; be wise then, and gather from its pages all the instruction, and from its examples all the applications possible—to some of you it may prove worth five cents the letter.

There is something about the business of picking pockets that is particularly charming.—What it is beside its emoluments and daring excitements, is not to be easily told; but there are many amateurs in it besides the regular professionals. It is only the unpractised experimenters in the graceful art, that are ever caught in the act; the thorough-bred pick-pocket selects so well his victim, his time and opportunity, that these joined with his dexterous way of doing the job, render him almost exempt from detection.

Pick-pockets are of both sexes; indeed the females are the more successful, possibly because less liable to suspicion; no man of any gallantry whatever would ever suspect that the black-eyed, red-lipped, cherry-cheeked beauty, so faultlessly and fashionably arrayed, who sits opposite him in

an omnibus was a professional thief—or for a moment imagine that at the very moment he is most admiring her many charms, she is endeavoring to perfect a plan to rob him of his purse and possibly his watch and breast-pin, as she brushes past him in getting out of the stage. Yet it is even so—such are the ways of the world, and the wickedness of women.

Pick-pockets go well dressed; it is the very necessity of their profession; their fashionable attire and slap-up appearance generally, are the key which admits them among the very respectable but exceeding innocent and unsuspecting people whose surplus cash they design to appropriate to their own pressing necessities. They often, however, expose themselves to the experienced eye by over-doing this;—mounting a profusion of jewelry, and wearing embroidered bosomed shirts, and pants and coats of the most stunning patterns, far transcending all limits of good taste.—In this however they are rivalled by the gamblers, and even the rich fast men of the town,who make great pretensions to immaculate respectability; so that really it is sometimes a very difficult matter to tell a pick-pocket from one of the aristocratic "bloods" of the city.

The female pick-pockets are also generally attired in the most elaborate style—and at this time like many of their sisters of a more indelicate profession, frequently carry such an expanse of crinoline and other mysterious contrivances, that it is quite a journey to travel round one of them; all the flummery in the way of laces, trimmings, jewelry, and the thousand expensive nothings of female attire which can be piled on to a fashionable lady, are worn by these feminine rascals. Not a few of them are very beautiful, and employ all their

fascinations in the way of business, to throw the intended victim off his guard while the robbery is being accomplished.

The pick-pocket is never at home except in a crowd; then only can they work to full advantage and without exciting suspicion; and therefore whenever there is a rush of people to any particular spot, then are these gentry the first on hand. They are always in full feather at Steamboat Excursions, Grand Railroad Jubilees, Conventions, State Fairs and public shows of all kinds.

In New York they are particularly to be found at the places of amusement. Two of them, a male and female, will frequently attend the theatre or opera together, and in the crush of getting in and out, they generally contrive to secure some rich plunder, and being dressed in the height of fashion, and to all appearances the very pink of respectability, suspicion is disarmed, and their true character is never suspected by their unfortunate victims until too late to reach them. The women frequent the cars, omnibuses, and stores; on pleasant days, when the latter are thronged with customers, they may be found busily engaged pricing goods, and ladies when shopping should avoid coming in personal contact with strangers however well appearing, or fashionably dressed.

Female pick-pockets confine their attentions mostly to their own sex; and as they are familiar with all the intricate mysteries of the female wardrobe, they are perfectly qualified to search out the hidden hoard however cunningly concealed.—Their mode of operating is by means of a very sharp knife or pair of scissors, by the dexterous use of which they take away the entire pocket when necessary, or cut into and extract therefrom the porte-monnaie or purse, which is quickly emp-

tied and thrown away. Some pick-pockets use a small blade of razor-like sharpness attached to a finger-ring; a knowledge of this fact may enable some men to account for a delicate slit in their clothing not made by the shears of their tailor.

Another method of pocket robbing to some extent in vogue, is through the agency of Chloroform. As an example, we quote the following from one of our city papers:—

"Chloroform is being used in thefts with great adroitness and frequency. A Mrs. Fitzgerald was riding in one of the New York omnibuses on Tuesday, when another well dressed lady entered, and apparently took out her handkerchief and passed it carelessly two or three times before Mrs. F.'s face, who observed a peculiar odor, but recollects nothing further until she woke up and found the other lady gone, and her own pockets thoroughly stripped of everything valuable."

This same manœuvre has been put in practice in Railroad cars, upon both lady and gentleman passengers by both male and female scoundrels; indeed upon a night train the thing would be most convenient. People travelling, and especially ladies, should have a care as to who sits behside them; and be very chary of accepting a "little cordial," or "smelling salts" from the hands of a stranger.

It is said the Parisian thieves are much more expert than those of New York, making use of ingenious contrivances not known here. Among other things they are said to manage to do a good business in vehicles, by the use of *false hands and arms;* the fictitious members are allowed to repose quietly in the lap of the operator, thus putting at rest all suspicion, while the real hands are making little voyages of exploration into the pockets of

the adjoining people. No case of this kind has to our knowledge been detected in our immaculate city of New York, but we have no doubt our enterprising rascals will introduce this inglorious foreign custom, when they find their own devices fail them. And as applicable to other manœuvres as well as this in question, we would say to all our readers, when seated beside strangers, whether in coach, car, theatres or conventions, never allow that stranger's cape, shawl, mantilla or dress to rest concealingly over that part of your person where your money is deposited.

The best way to avoid pick-pockets, is to *keep out of crowds.* In cities this rule applies to all classes and to almost all circumstances; well knowing they cannot operate effectually except in a throng, the lower class of thieves frequently resort to numerous ingenious devices to draw a crowd together. They sometimes get up sham fights at the steamboat landings railroad depots, and to give the thing a real look, stand regular licks and bloody noses; in the rush and pressure to see the fun, the accomplices of the combatants usually contrive to do a very handsome business.

The true way to avoid losing by these cunning rogues, is to carry but little money about the person. Here, you young Innocent from the country, when you come to see the Elephant the first thing you do, go to a respectable hotel, or to the store of some trusty friend, and have the bulk of your cash deposited in a safe; never perambulate the city with more money than is sufficient to pay your way handsomely. Few city men as a general thing carry in their pockets larger sums than five or ten dollars. Then, if the pocket is robbed, the amount the thief gets is not enough to make him in love with his profession; nor is it

enough to make the loser insolvent, unless he is doing business on a very small capital.

Of the multitude of cases of petty pocket robbery which have been reported in the papers, perhaps one single case will suffice as an illustration and warning.

A young Englishman, one of the true cockney sort, who could no more put his "h's" in the right place, than he could put his head into his boots, came from the old country in his youth, and settled in some barbarous county of New Jersey, where in addition to his English infelicities of speech and manner, he acquired some Jersey peculiarities, which it might be supposed would entirely unfit him forever for the companionship of civilized beings —— however this is not to the purpose.

The name of our young cockney appropriately enough is England; and he bears the Scripture pre-nomen of Isaac. After several years sojourn of Isaac in the Jersey wilds, he decided to visit New York and seek his fortune.

Ike was shrewd enough to tell a steam saw-mill from a wild pigeon, and could distinguish with remarkable accuracy between a blackberry bush and a log-cabin; and hence gathered confidence that he could open that huge oyster, the world, and extract the savory meat, without pricking his fingers with the shells. After due preparation Ike came to the city, which he immediately pronounced to be considerable of a village, but nothing to what we "ave in Hingland;" Ike however, had heard enough of the "tricks and traps" of this interesting town, to convince him that the thieves and swindlers are pretty keen in their way, and the sequel satisfied him that they at least are fully up to what they "ave in Hingland."

With commendable prudence, Ike resolved to make sure of his funds so that no New York sharper should do him out of his cash—he was confident in his ability to take care of his own money as well as anybody else could do it for him, and therefore did not leave it at his hotel; it was not wise to carry it loose; and after due consideration he hit upon the notable plan of sewing up his precious store in his pocket; judging that if he himself could not get at his funds without ripping up the stitches, no one else would be able to accomplish the feat. Having done this, and reserved enough small change to pay for what beans and bread he might be disposed to consume in the course of the day's rambles, Ike started out to see the Lions.

Time passed quickly away; Ike opened wide his fish-grey eyes, for he saw more wonders than he ever dreamed of even in "Hingland." He made many acquaintances, such as they were; for a habit of asking many questions led him into many very queer places, and among the rest of his new found friends was a pretty black-eyed maiden, in seeming great distress, whom he met in Chatham street, just in the edge of the evening. She accosted him, grew very confidential, and gently drew him into an alley-way, where unobserved she might recount to him her woes; and finally so touched upon his sensitive feelings that he was disposed to relieve her necessities with a liberal portion of his money; on putting his hand to his pocket, however, it encountered the precautionary stitches which guarded his treasure, and he was fain to limit his charity to giving the fascinating but unfortunate Jewess all the small change he had reserved for his supper and evening enjoyments.

Making a hasty promise to meet her at the same hour the next evening, he tore himself away from her blandishments and took himself to his lodgings; on arriving there, his first work was to see that his money was all right. He found the stitches as he had placed them in the morning, and greatly felicitated himself upon having balked the New York pick-pockets; but a further examination convinced him his money was gone—a small slit had been cut in his pocket, and his funds extracted through this new place of exit.

The interesting black-eyed girl had done it.—When the verdant Isaac, touched to the heart by her tears, had put his hand to his pocket for money, the action had betrayed to his fair but false companion the exact locality of the treasure. It was she who had cut the pocket and extracted the dimes, and this too after Ike had given her all the other money he had in the world.

Isaac now thinks New York pick-pockets quite surpass anything they "av in Hingland;" and he has so far lost confidence in the whole female sex since that little occurrence, that he solemnly avers he wouldn't trust any woman as far as he could throw a meeting-house by the steeple, or a four year old Elephant by its tail.

## CHAPTER IV.

### GARROTTERS AND HIGHWAYMEN.

Of course our readers wish to know something of the institution of Garrotting, which a short time ago was one of the fashionable amusements of our city. Also, of the knife and slung-shot entertainments, to which strangers and even our own citizens are occasionally invited without ceremony to partake of.

Garrotting is the Spanish for choking; Garrotter is the Spanish for choker; but what the Spanis for the man who gets choked, we don't know and don't think it of very great importance to know.

Garrotting is made use of in Spain, in Mexico, and the Spanish colonies generally, as a means of executing condemned criminals. The process is that of seating the culprit against a beam from which protrudes a sharp spike so as to touch the back of the neck; around the post and around the victims neck passes an iron collar, which by means of a lever and screw forces the spike into the spinal column, separating the vertebræ and causing instant death; a seeming barbarous process but perhaps less painful than hanging.

In the countries named the garrotte is in the hands of honest men and the villains are the

*chokees ;* but in this enlightened land the rogues have turned the tables on the honest folks and become the *chokers ;* so look out you fellows who wander o' nights into strange places in strange company.

Garrotting in New York, means the choking the presence of mind and strength out of a man in an instant, for the purpose of robbing him while in that delightful condition. The operation is generally performed by a gang, usually three or four; they approach the customer from behind and while one or two hold his arms, the chief or chokemaster throws his arm around the neck of his victim, forcing back his head, jamming his chin so hard against his upper jaw that it is impossible for him to make a noise, while at the same time the throat is so violently constricted that the sufferer can not breathe.

While in this perfectly helpless position another of the gang rifles his pockets of all his valuables, and as a finishing stroke he is generally knocked down by a blow on the head, that he may not be able to collect his scattered senses before the operators make good their escape. Thus it will be seen that garrotting is highway robbery, unattended with any of the romance with which it was formerly surrounded by the gentlemanly practitioners of that delightful profession. It is highway robbery aggravated and made unbearable by the most brutal violence and complete disregard of human suffering.

Street robbery by aid of the knife is seldom resorted to, as it is difficult to strike a blow that will prevent an outcry from the victim ; blood, too, would be likely to fall upon the operator's clothes and lead to his detection. The slung-shot is therefore the most appropriate weapon ; it consists of a

short rope or strap, with a leaden or iron ball at one end and a loop at the other ; the loop passes over the wrist while the cord is taken in the hand and the ball swings free.

The slung-shot is both a convenient and dangerous weapon; it can be carried in the pocket at all times, or gathered in the hand or under the cuff ready for instant service, while a blow from it when swung by a nervous arm is most deadly. Thus provided the robber turns upon his victim as he passes him, or creeps up stealthily behind him, or perhaps boldly asks the time of night, and as the unsuspecting and accommodating stranger looks down upon his gold repeater, cracks him over the head, seizes the watch and runs. There is about as much wisdom in shaking one's leg over a boat's side under a shark's nose, as in exhibiting a watch after dark in the streets of New York city; keep beyond striking distance of every stranger that accosts you after ten o'clock, P. M., or after dusk if it be in a by-street, even if he *appears* to be helplessly drunk.

In the good old romantic days of Dick Turpin and Claude Duval; of the Paul Cliffords of our romance writers, robbery was elevated to one of the fine arts, and highwaymen were at the same time the terror of the men, and the admiration of the women; so much so, that even the first novel writer of the age was not ashamed to devote two whole books in illustration and praise of a highwayman hero.

The robber of those times rode the best horses that the purest blood could produce; carried the best arms that craftsmen's skill could invent; and attired himself in the jauntiest and most costly clothes that money could buy. One of these polite gentlemen of the road would stop a coach or

travelling carriage with the pleasant air of a gentleman, aud rob all the inmates with the manners of a prince; apologizing to the gentlemen while he took their purses and watches, and praising the beauty of the ladies while in the act of possessing himself of their jewelry and trinkets. Having satisfactorily accomplished his job, he would raise his laced hat with a bewitching grace, and ride away like a noble cavalier. Now there would be some satisfaction in being robbed in that kind of style, and if a man did not have any money with him, he would almost feel like giving the engaging brigand his note for thirty days payable to bearer, and no questions asked.

But alas, for the degeneracy of the times! the good old pleasant days of being robbed in gentle peace and aristocratic comfort are gone forever. The highway-man of this age is a brutal ruffian, armed with bludgeon and slung-shot, too cowardly even to attack a single man except with a gang at his heels, and who having stripped you of all your money will smash your skull in very excess of dastard brutality. Of such are the street robbers of New York city. Until the streets are nearly deserted they avoid respectable quarters, and hang about the by-streets or public parks; or lie in wait along the lonely avenues in the upper part of the city; they seldom attack a *sober* person. Occasionally a belated business man, or one bound home from the cars, or out late in quest of a physician, is troubled with their attentions. But in almost every case of street robbery, and garrotting in particular, an investigation would show that the victim was obfusticated with liquor. Sometimes a careless, sauntering stranger is pitched into and relieved of his valuables, but as a general thing they pay their court to young gen-

tlemen going home "ELEVATED" by champaign from tall parties; or "tight" from a gambling house; or "tipsy" from having a good time with a crowd of good fellows somewhere.

Garrotting, as an institution, may be said to be almost extinct in this city—it went out of fashion in a desperate hurry immediately after a sensible Judge sentenced three garrotters to the State's prison; one for life, and two for twenty-one years each. They didn't seem to appreciate the joke of this kind of dealing, and we have heard very little of performances in the garrotting line, in the course of eight months.

It may be laid down as a first-rate truth, that strangers need fear little from garrotters or slung-shot men if they keep *sober*, and don't go into places where they "shouldn't oughter." But if they are so anxious to see city life that they *will* go to the sailor dance-houses in Water street, and will "trip the light fantastic toe" in the Dutch "Apollo Rooms" of Centre and William streets; and will "shake a leg" in the Dead Rabbit Assemblies of the Five Points; or "jerk their little pas" with the saddle-colored beauties in the "nigger" dance houses of Thomas street and West Broadway; if they *will* poke their noses into every panel-crib, and pick-pockets' dens, and flash drinking shops, and thieves' rendezvous they can hear of or scent out, and *won't* be content unless they "sample" the poisonous liquors at every rum hole on the route, and get so "toddied" that they cannot tell a dictionary from a hook-and-ladder-truck, why then they need not complain if they are garrotted or have their skulls broken.

We have one piece of advice for all our readers that if adhered to will secure them almost entirely from attack:—*Keep sober, and go only where you*

*have honest and reputable business to attend to.* In fact the great rule for any man's conduct in a city, by the observance of which he may go, from the age of kites and peg-tops to that of spectacles and crutches, without ever a fight or the symptom of one, is "*keep sober, and maintain a civil tongue in your head.*"

We close this chapter with an account of a case of garrotting which occurred in a back street where a respectable white man has no more business in the night time, than a jackass has in a double bed. It is a low tale, but is given to show young men how *Rum,* by inducing low taste and reckless habits, can debase a being created "a little lower than the angels."

Our frail hero's name is Scranton. We don't wish to expose the young man by giving his real name; so for this occasion we will give him the prenomen of a Roman emperor, and call him Adrian. Well, Adrian is a good hearted fellow, but he drinks. He can do a great variety of things of no particular use to anybody, and he drinks. He was too smart for the country where he was born, so he came to this city; he is a capable young man—but he drinks.

On the particular occasion to which we refer, Adrian had been having a good time with some dashing young ladies not of the tee-total order; wine had been tasted, to say nothing of brandy punches. And when Adrian started for his boarding house his head hummed like a bee-hive. He met an acquaintance and did cock-tails with him; then they set down and talked over politics—then they did cock-tails; then they eat some stews and Welsh rare-bits—then they did cock-tails—then they did cock-tails—after that they did cock-tails and then started for home—but the landlord called

them back, and they did cock-tails with him ; then they did cock-tails with the bar-keeper—as it was then getting late and the bar-keeper wished to close, they did cock-tails and left.

Adrian's friend at once deserted him and left the overloaded youth to pursue his journey alone. But at this crisis the young man had become slightly confused, and quite undecided whether he was afoot or on horseback ; he gazed intently for some time at a hydrant, trying to decide whether it was his bedstead or his friend Seymour ; he wanted to do the polite thing ; if it was his bedstead he wanted to pull off his boots and retire ; but if it was his friend Seymour he wanted to propose cock-tails ; but he didn't want to go bed on his friend Seymour, nor ask his bedstead to drink with him. He says he doesn't know how he ever decided this knotty point, but he distinctly remembers that cock-tails came of it.

On the corner of the next street he fell in with a sandy-haired girl, who pitying his condition offered to see him home. Having once attended a Woman's Rights meeting, and seen the pictures in Harper's, and having a vague impression that it was leap-year, he thanked her kindly, thrust his arm under hers, and thus escorted and protected he moved on.

In Duane street they were met by four fellows, who seeing Adrian's condition quickly hustled the girl away, and put him through the garrotting process ; he was divested of his money, watch, finger-rings, coat and boots, in less time than he could have swallowed another cock-tail ; then, for a finish, they gave him a blow which left him extended upon the side-walk.

Sobered somewhat by the performance, the abused individual picked himself up, and pro-

tected by his plucked appearance from further harm, he reached his home without being again molested.

Whatever became of the sandy-haired girl Scranton cannot tell; but he is strongly of opinion that as she had designs upon his valuables, she was as much disconcerted, and probably lost as much by the garrotters as himself.

Our readers may rest assured that there has not been one case of garrotting in a hundred where the *garrottee* has not prepared himself for the operation by the indiscriminate use of "Cock-tails," "Cobblers," "Juleps" or "Smashers," and they need fear little from the garrotters if they will only mind our golden rule—"*Keep sober, and don't go where you 'shouldn't oughter.'*"

## CHAPTER V.

### GAMBLING AND GAMBLING-HOUSES.

"*I* don't gamble, and so this chapter doesn't refer to *me*." How do you know it doesn't?—You'd better read it and see, and not throw the book down in that disdainful sort of way, as if you were as pious as a high-pressure martyr and didn't know any more about sin than a bull-frog does of eating peaches and cream.

We didn't, hasty reader, take you for a gambler; and this book isn't written for gamblers, we'd have you to understand; but for honest chaps like you and the writer, who don't bet "Faro," or "Fight the tiger," but who ought to have an idea of how the thing is done, and the slippery paths that lead to where it is enacted, lest we be tricked into it some day, or find ourselves unconsciously sliding downwards into its ruinous vortex. If you now understand us, and have got done putting on airs, and are ready to act sensibly, we will go on with our subject.

It is by no means difficult to write an interesting chapter upon gambling in New York; for there is every variety of it done here, from the knot of negroes in a beer cellar, hustling pennies in a hat, to the operations of Wall street, by which tens of thousands are lost at a sweep; but the difficulty

lies in writing so as to excite the *fears* and the wholesome *disgust* of inexperienced young men, rather than merely to raise and stimulate a dangerous curiosity. You will hardly believe us, unsophisticated reader, when we assert that many articles, and some books are published abusive of a particular vice, on purpoce to induce persons to practice it. There are too many young persons ready to say, "your preaching may all be very good, dear grand-mother, but I would like to see the folly of it too." We have not a doubt, that if disposed, we could make a cash contract with some of our gambling-house keepers, to write a flowery book upon this subject; we to have a *carte-blanche* to say all we chose denunciatory of them and their profession, and they to take thousands of the work off our hands for gratuitous distribution; and we are very confident that some weak, heedless, self-conceited, self-confident, reckless, light-headed, simple-minded, over-curious, foolish descendants of Adam and Eve, will directly after reading this book, step into some Mock Auction shop, "just to see how the thing is done," and get bit before they leave it.

How! did you laugh then reader, and say that you did not doubt it too? Well, my fine fellow, have a care that despite reading this very chapter you do not find yourself some day laughing out of the other side of your mouth as you leave some gambling hole. Remember Deacon Pillcochia, and "take heed lest *you* fall."

The Gambling Hells in this city abound in every street; they are of two descriptions, the secret, and the open; the latter are vile appearing and repulsive, while the former are fitted up with great splendor; some rivalling even Oriental magnificence in gorgeousness. Against the lower order

of these houses it is needless to say anything, for a stranger would not think of entering one of them unless he was so far gone as to be beyond the influence of advice and warning; and as to the aristocratic hells, were we so unwise as to point them out, it would avail our readers nothing, since they could not obtain admittance to them without an introduction. It is against *false friends* and the *incipient taste* or habit of gambling, that we would fore-arm our readers.

The manner in which the great majority of young people are inducted into the mysteries and excitements of games of chance is, by the various styles of *social* or private gambling, begun in the company of friends or companions, and generally for no greater stakes than "the oysters," a "bottle of wine," or "theatre tickets," or some comparatively inexpensive trifles. It all costs money though, and many a man begins in this way, who would shrink back, if he saw so many dollars actually placed upon the table with the proposition to play for them and see who should take the pile away with him. There are thousands of ways of gaming without cards or dice, or any of the professional paraphernalia; and "matching pennies" infringes the moral statute against this fascinating vice, just as much as betting five hundred on a king, or "going a thousand better" on "three Aces and a pair of high-heeled Jacks." Playing a rubber of "Whist" at "five dollars" a corner, or doing a little "twenty deck poker," with a dollar "ante," is no more gambling, than going "odd or even," for the drinks, or skipping a copper for a shilling stew and mug of ale.

Rats-bane is Rats-bane, be the lump large or small.

A taste for acquiring money without work is de-

veloped by betting ; for in fact any game of chance can be reduced to a bet. This dangerous practice obtains largely with our country cousins ; as much so in proportion to their numbers, perhaps, as the more marked procedure of direct gaming among the accomplished sharpers of the town.

Young men in the country, while hanging about the "store," or the blacksmith's shop, are exceeding apt to indulge in a little social game of brag as to their achievements of strength, skill, or agility ; and have many a dispute as to the weight of a fat ox or a favorite pig ; the speed of a fast horse ; the length of time in which a certain man can plough an acre ; whether A can rake and bind as fast as B can cradle ; how many cords of wood Jones can chop in a day, and whether Brown can lift a barrel of cider by the chimes and throw it over the tail-board, and so on. All these points are animatedly discussed and result generally in a wager, which when feasible is decided on the spot. In this way our rural friends, many of them, come to the city pretty well prepared to go a greater length in gambling, just so soon as they became possessed of more money to back up their opinions with. The transition of betting mugs of cider on the weight of a pig, to betting a "pile" on the speed of a horse, or the color of a card, is by no means so great as it may seem.

Now the argument from all this is, that the city is held responsible for all the sins of the country in this respect, and young men are said to be "led from the paths of rectitude by the vices of the town," and all that sort of humbug ; when the fact is, that they had got so far out of the sight of rectitude before they left home, that they probably never would have got back again, city or no city. But our mission is not to defend the city, thank

fortune; for if it were we should have our hands full for the rest of our natural life. We only want gently to insinuate, that the old city has got sins enough of her own to bear, without having thrust upon her shoulders, broad as they are, all those of her country cousins.

We have said that it was not possible to gain admittance to the upper Gambling Hells without an introduction—this is true—Fifth Avenue itself is not half so exclusive.

And why is this? Think you, my simple friend, it is because their proprietors fear the police?—Why, as a matter of pride and assurance, Pat Heine would at any time bet the Astor House (he is rich enough to buy it), against an apple woman's stand, that he could not be shut up for a single evening. No, my good friend, if you knew who own the buildings where these Hells are kept; who patronise them, and who are patronised by their keepers, you would be well satisfied that no law except "black-mail" law, can affect them.—No! it is to keep out the fathers, brothers and friends of victims in course of being fleeced; to prevent the honest merchant from seeing what his partners, clerks or customers are about, that this wall of exclusiveness is maintained. You can only be introduced, Young Innocence, by some acquaintance of the proprietor *in whom he has confidence:* that confidence being based upon the fact, that your chaperon (introducer) is either a paid agent—a "stool pigeon" or "roper-in," or a man who is on the direct road to ruin himself, and who has become so reckless, that he would not hesitate to drag a friend with him, and, perhaps, share in the profits of his plucking.

And now you city youth, who are about to come into possession of a fortune; you, student

from the South, whose rich parents grant you every desire; you Western juvenile, whose father counts his prairie acres of wheat by the thousands; and you young man from the East, whose energy, industry, capability, and hitherto unspotted integrity, have gained for you the entire confidence together with the custody of the books, safe-keys and treasures of our Merchant Princes and Bankers, look for a moment at the pit-falls around your feet, and the spring-nets over your heads.

*Every one of you are marked men:* the gaming-house keepers have spotted you; your names are entered upon their books; your present means and future expectations; the money that passes through your hands, together with your facilities for reaching more, and of covering up delinquences by false entries and other means, are all estimated; and your habits and little indulgences all noted. No Collect from the Directory, or from the minutes of the Assessors or of the Parisian Marriage Brokers and Secret Police combined, could give as good a clue to a man's position, prospects and habits, and consequently of his value as a "pigeon," and his availability of being "plucked," as does this "Doom Book" of the gambling fraternity give of you. You are watched and your footsteps dogged; your detectors and tempters move in the best society; some of them hold positions of authority and trust; they were once honest and true men, and having been tempted and fallen themselves, know well how to drag others down. Nor are your tempters confined to the male sex alone; women, and in the first circles too, lend themselves innocently or designedly to the work of initiating you into this dangerous vice—like fat trout, whose habits and locality certain keen sportsmen well know, you are eagerly sought after, and every

thing that sociality and good fellowship can accomplish to mask their approaches and disguise their bait, rest assured will be put in play.

Distrust then all persons who invite you to play for a sum, however trifling the amount; especially BEWARE OF THE MAN WHO WOULD INDUCE YOU TO ENTER A GAMBLING HELL ON ANY PRETENCE WHATEVER; SHUN HIM—CUT HIM INSTANTER—AS YOU WOULD THE EVIL ONE, THE MOMENT YOU SEE HIS CLOVEN FOOT.

Sometimes a man finds himself in one of these places of perdition before he is aware of it; he is invited by his designing friend to see some choice paintings; to visit a shooting gallery; or private club-house, where some fine spirits meet to smoke and sing and joke, and, assenting, suddenly finds himself in large and splendid apartments, garnished with the most costly mirrors, pictures, carpets and furniture—he is invited to the supper table, which is covered with everything that can tempt the appetite, including the choicest wines, of all of which he is invited to partake scot free; if his eyes be not open now to where he is, or, if opened, and he be fool-hardy enough to sit at this board, nine chances to one he is in an hour's time fitted to take a calm look at the "tiger," (as the faro banks or roulette tables are jocularly and zoologically called,) or any other engine of evil that may be presented him.

He looks at the gaming table; he sees there what would be fortunes to him won on the turn of a card; he sees piles of gold and rolls of bills rapidly changing hands; if he is tempted to play himself he may win a few dollars and depart richer than he came; but, foolish man, you are like to a fish with the bait in his mouth; the hook and line is attached thereto, and in the end you will be brought up with a round turn.

It is not the object of this book to inflame curiosity to see these hells, any more than to make it serve as a directory where to find them; but to tell men in the plainest terms *keep away—don't go into them: if by any chance you find yourself in one, flee instantly, as you would from the mouth of the bottomless pit.* Be assured it is the only safe way. For if once you venture into a place where you see money changing hands in large quantities every minute, and men coining big piles of gold without effort or exertion, your fingers will itch to dip into the golden heap, and the chances are ten to one that you will drag out your spare dollars and go at it, and if you do, you may in an hour acquire a taste that can never be entirely relinquished. A man's common sense may cause him to forsake the *habit* of gambling, but he can no more eradicate the *taste* than he can pull off his head with a boot-jack.

It is a curious fact that lookers-on at a gaming table never see any but the winning side. Can't you see, you miserable numbscull, (pardon us for knocking you over the head to bring you to your senses,) that for every dollar one man wins a hundred cents must come out of another's pocket? Go to! some of you men who ordinarily have sense enough to make money elsewhere and come here like fools to waste it. Go to! get up a stock company; pay in your money and then draw it out in checks in proportion to your shares—hire rooms and set yourselves to gambling; as fast as one of you is cleaned out let him leave, and let no money be carried away from the establishment—pay your landlord one dollar for each game you play, and at the end of a few months what will your dividends, and what your stock be worth? Your landlord will have absorbed it all.

In this example, reader, you have a true exhibit of the rationale of all gambling; it is the keepers of these hells alone that make the money; whatever the winner takes away one evening he is sure to bring back and lose the next. Do you think the managers of these dens do not know their men? Do you suppose they do not understand how to deal their cards? Would they venture to sustain those expensive rooms, that army of hangers-on and attendants, those free suppers with wine running as unchecked as if it were Croton, did they not know when and how to turn up the knave of trumps?

In one word, reader, *Gaming as practiced at the fashionable hells in New York, is only an immense, gaudy "Thimble Rig" and "Patent Safe Game" swindle.*

Now, we suppose, you expect a story to close this chapter; something humorous to relieve its sombreness; but what is the use; to attempt to be funny over such a subject would be like cracking jokes at a funeral; and as to gambling stories the papers and books are full of such, and the prisons are crowded with the heroes of them; the grave too is filled with the suicides and broken hearts consequent upon indulgence in the vice of gambling. If, dear reader, we have thus far led you on by endeavoring to amuse, in order to fix your attention, and thereby instruct you, excuse us now when our theme is too excessively harrowing to be dull, and let us all finish this chapter in a frame of mind suited to an advantageous contemplation of its subject.

Take then, friends, the advice of a man who has been through the mill; who knows every spot on the cards, every point on the dice, and every chance on the balls, and don't make a beginning;

don't gamble; don't wager, don't bet; if you once get under way, it will cost you all you can earn, beg, borrow or steal; if you begin with oysters you will end with doubloons. If the clerk gambles, the till suffers; if the merchant games the banks lose; robbery and forgery are the natural results and Sing Sing looms in the distance.

PLEASANT PROSPECTIVE.

Beware, young readers, of *weak companions* and *false friends;* if you are asked to go to the theatre or to play a social game of whist, do so, but stop there—if you are invited to bet even a trifle, have the manliness to refuse *point-blank;* say you have read this little book, and one that understands the matter well, has said therein, that the man who wagers is a *fool*, whose companionship is unprofitable, while he who would take an acquaintance to a gambling saloon may be safely set down as a *villain*, with whom further communication is dangerous.

Don't gamble; don't wager; don't bet.

—o—

If any of our readers desire to peruse an intensely interesting narrative, descriptive of the manner in which, in England, young men of wealth are ruined—systematically plucked—by aristocratic gamblers; and thereby be able to form a better judgment of *what may be going on here*, let them obtain

the "Diary of a London Physician" and read the article referred to below. It may be issued shortly as a volume of our Half-Dime Hand-Books.

——— Prison, London, Oct. 17, 1831.

To the Editor of the Morning Herald,

Sir—There is an awful narrative in the current number of Blackwood's Magazine, of the fate of a gamester, which, in addition to the writer's assurances, bears intrinsic evidence of *truth*. Independent even of this I can believe it all, highly colored as some may consider it—for I am a *ruined gamester*.

Yes, sir, I am lying here as it were *rotting* in jail, because I have, like a fool, spent over a gaming table all my patrimony; *twenty-five thousand pounds* are all gone at *Rouge et Noir* and Hazard! All gone! I could not help thinking that the writer of that terrible account had *me* in his eye, or has been told something of my history.

If I had a hundred pounds to spare, I would spend it all in re-printing the "Gambler" from Blackwood's Magazine, and distributing it among the frequenters of C——'s and F——'s, and other hells. I am sure its overwhelming truth and power would shock *some* into pausing on the brink of ruin.

I am, sirs, yours obediently,

A Ruined Gamester.

## VALEDICTORY.

Readers we have a great respect for you all, especially for those of you who have paid their five cents for this book instead of borrowing it of a suffering friend; and as we have now come to the close of this volume we suppose you expect us to throw in a benediction, and wish you good luck and happiness, all for the same five cents. It is a good deal to give for the money, but we are disposed to be generous and not stand for trifles; and so we wish you, one and all, a pleasant journey through life; as much money as will be a real benefit to you; a large share of common sense with wit to use it, and all for no extra charge.

And now don't, for Heaven's sake, any of you go and make insane jackasses of yourselves by running into the very snares that we have warned you against. When you come to New York try to act honestly by every one; for we assure you that one-half the people who are taken in by the tricks we have described, lose their money while endeavoring to swindle somebody else. Keep your eyes wide open, and shun the advances of smooth spoken strangers of both sexes—don't trust any one until an acquaintance of longer than a single day has given you assurauce of his fairness and honesty, and last not least, DON'T GET DRUNK.

You will have enough to do to keep out of trouble if you retain the full possession of your five senses and four limbs; but you are morally certain to get into a muss if you stupify yourself with

"doctored" liquors until you can't tell whether it is you or the pavement is moving; and don't know whether you are in Broadway or a tamarack swamp. When a stranger is in town in such an oblivious state that he takes the City Hall Park for a sugar bush, and the Park Fountain for the sap kettle, his condition is sure to be discovered by many of the honorable gentlemen who make that delightful locality their haunt, and pick up an honest living by larceny, and the visitor is then safe to be taken in with a vengeance.

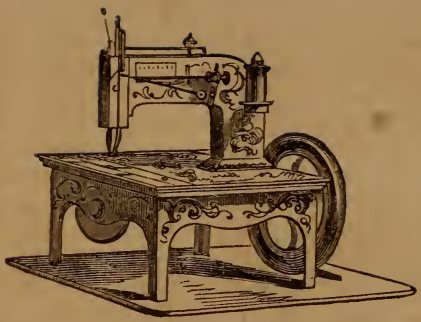
There are other games which are practised upon strangers; other evils to warn them against, which we shall take up in succeeding volumes.

And now, good readers, we shall leave you—for a month—to your reflections; we trust you are not quite so green as when you began the perusal of this pamphlet; we truly hope that you are slightly wiser, and sharper, and up-to-snuffer than you were—if so, we shall not regret the time we have spent in writing, any more than you will regret the half-dime you have expended for the

*"Tricks and Traps of New York."*

AVERY CLASSICS

SEWING MACHINE.



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# TRICKS AND TRAPS

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" 10. — Confidence Women — Confiding Creatures — Indignant Husband Dodge.

" 11. — Street Walkers — Panel Games.

" 12. — Hackmen — Porters — Hotels, &c.


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